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Houses to Harijans in rural areas

* 139-H *Q.*—

MR. SPEAKER : The hon. Member Sri A. Ratnam is not in his seat. The question and answer will be printed in the proceedings.

SRI A. RATNAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) the amount provided in the First Five-Year Plan for providing houses to Harijans in rural areas ; and

(*b*) the amount spent for the above purpose?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : (*a*) No amount was provided.

(*b*) Does not arise.

New bus permits

* 139-I *Q.*—SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether any Government Order laying down the principles for the grant of new bus permits by the Regional Transport Authorities was issued recently ; and

(*b*) if so, whether the Government will be pleased to place a copy of it on the table of the House?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : (*a*) Yes.

(*b*) An extract [a] from G.O. No. 1298, Home, dated 28th April 1956, containing directions regarding the principles to be observed by all Transport Authorities in regard to the grant of State carriage permits is placed on the table of the House.

SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM : The decision of the Government to fix viable units of five buses for each operator is no doubt a welcome one. But, I am afraid whether this object will be achieved at all by the method by which this is sought to be achieved because there is no prohibition to issue any bus permits to fleet owners who own already more than five buses. The other reason is the single bus operator is not going to be benefited immediately than the four bus owners who will get the fifth bus and this arrangement will place them at a very disadvantageous position. So, will the Government reconsider their decision and change the order of preference for the issue of new permits to small operators by beginning to issue permits to single bus operators immediately? We cannot prohibit any fleet owner from getting a permit. But the chances of the fleet owner getting permits are easier and unless we give some kind of preference to the man who owns one or two buses it will not be possible for the Government to achieve their object.

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[a] Printed as Appendix II on pages 844–847 infra.

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THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : With regard to single bus owners, Sir, I think he is also placed in an advantageous position. But, apart from these rules, the Government do not think that there is any need for giving extra concession to anybody. After deep consideration, Government have framed these rules. We will give a fair trial to these rules for about six or seven months. It is not even six months since the rules have come into operation. And then, if the Government are satisfied that there is any need for change, we will do so only to benefit the small operator as has been suggested by Sri Kalyanasundaram.

SRI P. RAMAMURTHI : The constitutional position is very clear. But, within the framework of the Act, Government have framed certain rules whereby they give a certain priority for the fleet owners and the Government have also come to the conclusion that a viable unit is five buses. Therefore, so long as the single bus operators continue as single bus operators in comparison with four bus operator or a three bus operator, he is placed in a very disadvantageous position in the competitive trade. If he is to take his chance after all these people had their chances, then the single bus operators are placed at a disadvantage. In order to remove this flaw and to see that these people also reach that level, will the Govenment just change the order of priority? That is all the question.

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : Then, the man who owns four buses will continue to own four buses for a number of years. While we allow the four bus owners to remain where they are, we will have to be going on increasing the number of persons who own one or two buses. It will be possible to help the single bus operators also to reach the viable unit by allocating to them more routes after the four-bus operators have reached the viable limit, which is easier. There will be sufficient opportunity for single bus owners to reach the viable unit in course of time.

SRI V. K. RAMASWAMY MUDALIAR : Will the Hon. Minister tell us whether there are not instances where the transport authorities granted many permits and variations of routes contrary to the conditions of the Government Order issued recently and whether the High Court have, on the writ applications, set aside many of the orders passed against the spirit of the Government Order? Also, is it not a fact that the Government are again granting temporary permits and variations of routes in contravention of the High Court's orders?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : The Government have nothing to do with the grant of permits from 1st January 1956. It is the Transport Authorities in the district and the State Appellate Tribunal that grant these permits and review the appeals. There are certain appeals which go up to the High Court and except in a few cases, all the decisions of the Government are upheld by the High Court. There are certain cases which went up

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to the Supreme Court and there also the decision of the Government was upheld. If there is any miscarriage of justice by the authorities in the district, there is the Appellate Tribunal and the parties, who are aggrieved, may appeal to them. I do not think this vague allegation saying that the High Court has turned down all the decisions of the Government has any basis whatsoever. There are one or two suggestions which have been turned down. But, after the framing of these rules, I am quite sure that many of the big operators are finding it very difficult to get permits and there is sufficient encouragement for small bus operators to get more permits. As regards the point raised by Sri Kalyanasundaram and Sri Ramamurthi concerning the single bus operators, we will examine that question after a few months. If there are real difficulties, we will see that those difficulties are overcome. But the Government are satisfied with the present working of the rules framed by them.

SRI S. PANCHAKSHARAM : Shri O. V. Alagesan, the Hon. Deputy Minister in the Central Government, has been stating both inside and outside the Lok Sabha that permits are to be issued liberally to buses and lorries. Has this Government received any information from the Central Government and, if so, does the Government contemplate liberalizing the grant of permits for buses and lorries?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : As I said earlier, the Government have nothing to do with the grant of permits. The Government have powers to put private buses in places where buses are needed and to restrict the number of buses where there is monopoly or unnecessary competition which would affect the operators adversely. We have been issuing circulars after circulars to the authorities to find out the opinion of the people and put more buses in order to facilitate quick traffic. But the procedure is really cumbersome. It takes a lot of time and we are trying to reduce the months by amending the rules. For example, if an operator gets a permit, he can put a bus within four months on the road. The Government are now thinking whether the period of four months will be reduced to one month. By reducing the period to one month, Government would certainly quicken the issue of these grants.

SRI V. R. KRISHNA AYYAR : At present, under the marks system, which has been devised recently, the existing operators are given high marks in regard to fresh applications for the same route, which inevitably results in fostering monopolies and barring of new entrants altogether. Will the Hon. the Minister, therefore, issue a circular to all Regional Transport Authorities that they should primarily see that no monopolies are formed and that better facilities are given to new *bona fide* entrants in the line? 10-10 a.m.

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : Even the present rules help to curb monopoly; if rules are necessary for further curbing monopoly, we will think of it in course of time.

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SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP : Is there any restriction with reference to the quota or number of permits the Government issue in any particular year?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : No, Sir, the Government cannot restrict the issue of licences or fix any quota.

SRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM : In the mark system now in force, this difficulty arises. Applicants with four buses and less will be given one mark for each vehicle already licensed so that the owner of one vehicle gets one mark, the owner of two gets two marks and so on. Therefore, single-bus operators have no chance of getting additional permits in the near future and will not be able to survive. I plead that in the case of single-bus operators, special concession should be shown to protect them, especially in view of the recent policy of the Government with regard to renewal of permits. I am told fresh applications are invited creating insecurity for the existing operators with regard to their routes. May I suggest that the Government should take steps to protect single-bus operators and to that end, they should revert to the old practice of automatic renewal of permits?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : The hon. Member does not catch me. If there are 100 single-bus operators and four four-bus operators, until these 100 single-bus operators are provided to the level of four, the four-bus operators will be stagnated without being able to get to the viable limit. Therefore, I promise that I shall look into the question and see whether we can amend the rules without in any way lessening the speed with which four-bus operators could get to the viable limit and at the same time providing that the single-bus operator could also get more preference. All these have to be worked out and these depend upon the number of operators operating in a particular route in a particular district and the applications received for each route.

Revised list of Backward Classes

* 139-J *Q.*—SRI K. VINAYAKAM (on behalf of Sri K. V. Ramaswamy) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Religious Endowments and Transport be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have submitted a revised list of backward classes in our state to the Backward Classes Commission set up by the Government of India; and

(*b*) if so, whether a copy of this revised list will be placed on the table of the House?

THE HON. SRI B. PARAMESWARAN : (*a*) Yes, Sir. A revised list has been forwarded to the Government of India.

(*b*) The matter is, for the present, being treated as " top secret ".